

July 2026

INTERFACE

MONTHLY BULLETIN

MARLBOROUGH AMATEUR RADIO CLUB INC. P.O. BOX 432 BLENHEIM NZ

CLUB CALENDAR

General Meeting: 9 July 7.30pm, EOC, Wither Rd
Social Group; 16 July Dodson St Beer Garden
Committee Meeting; 23 July 7.30pm, via Zoom



VHF Mondays 1930 hrs
146.950MHz,
145.600MHz, 147.225MHz
Net Controller;
Rob Carter, ZL2IW

BRANCH 22 NOTICES

1. How the Internet Works - Anthony Winter 9 July
2. Pick-over/sale/swap night 13 Aug
3. CONSTRUCTORS' AWARD 10 Sept
4. 10 Pin Bowling 8 Oct

HF Net Tuesdays
1930 hrs 3876kHz

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July is mid winter and a bit chilly. I had Matariki for last month but it is actually 10 July! Oops.



TOPFEST; Call for speakers

If you would like to do a talk, we would love to hear from you.

Contact Nick ZL2NEB Nick@zl2neb.nz

Date: September 19 and 20

Venue: Vintage Car Club room,
Brayshaw Park.

Please note the **HF Net** on Tuesdays has had a start time change to 1930 hrs during winter. It will revert to 2030 when Daylight Saving kicks in.



Congratulations and welcome to the club to the 8 latest participants in our recent HamCram. We had a 100% pass rate.

Chris Cookson - ZL2MLB

David-Michael Buckman - ZL2DMB

Gaspard Torris - *non-résident donc pas de permis*

Herman van Vuuren - ZL2HJ

Jeremy Lamb - ZL2BAA 🥳 Love it Jeremy!

John Grant - ZL2JGX

Marc Wild - ZL3WIL

Tracey Currie - ZL2BDD (taking dad's callsign)

Gaspard is a French visitor leaving NZ later this year. As he is not a NZ resident, he is not allowed a NZ licence. RSM said no. He was aware of that when he enrolled. *Quel dommage.*

Grateful thanks to the tutors who gave their time and expertise to help these people pass their Ham licence.



I'm thinking of getting a pet to go jogging with me.

Maybe a turtle



Sharon Rennie, Christine Conway,
Tony Whitaker

Don't forget, I can only add you to the birthday or anniversary lists if you/someone tells me the dates!

As a result of the May article Stuart wrote about the 695 repeater, I received an email from Keith Browning ZL2TPQ. Obviously, from his first two sentences, you can tell he is an intelligent and discerning gentleman. As I responded and he replied, I have cobbled his emails together and removed the bits not associated with the original repeater theme but this tells you a bit more about the first repeater here.

Keith's father worked in telephone exchanges, then radio licensing, before starting a metals supply business. Keith himself was an apprentice radio, then TV, service person at Wright Stevenson, which became Wrightsons then Hay-Wright Stevenson/Haywrights. The workshop was based at one time at the back of the store in the square/High St. He then worked for Rabones Radio for a year before shifting to Tokoroa. After a couple of years, Haywrights asked him to come back to Blenheim. Blenheim Electric House kept making increasingly 'interesting' offers of a job so he worked there for a few years until the Haywrights area manager in Wellington made an offer to help him set up a small business in Dannevirke to do repairs for them and several other appliance retailers.

At the time Keith worked at Blenheim Electric House, he and a fellow worker, Ian McKenzie, got into building a repeater with Alan Wallace, ZL1AMW. Some of you will remember Alan (my foster brother) from his years here or as NZART President 1997 - 2001. Keith's emails are as follows;

Hi Caryl,

Denis, ZL2TDA forwarded me a copy of your amazing Marlborough Amateur Radio newsletter. I don't believe I've seen a better presented club newsletter. There is a (very) slight error in the early history of the 695 repeater.

Alan Wallace (Now ZL1AMW) and I built kitset 2 metre 'Climie' transceivers and felt the need for a local repeater. We were soon told that repeaters were licensed to clubs, not individuals.

We joined the local club and convinced the members that there was a future in narrow band FM as a mode for a two metre repeater. No easy task. AM was favoured and even SSB was promoted. I think the Blenheim repeater may have been the first or 2nd FM one in the South Island.

I had cobbled a temporary repeater using a Pye 'FM Cambridge' receiver and a 'Pye Reporter' TX and ran it for a while from Churchill St in Blenheim. Alan was working at the NZ Post Office radio section and installed it at the Jamie's Knob site. This was a temporary install as there were delays in getting the Waikato kit for the 'permanent repeater'. I don't recall the dates, but it was still in operation when we shifted to Dannevirke to start a repair business. That repeater concoction was easily recognised with a longish tail that ended with a burst of noise. I never got to see the Waikato kit.

Coincidentally, Alan called in to Dannevirke on a trip to Auckland and mentioned that he was considering buying a replacement for his Yaesu mobile radio. I suggested he sell me his Yaesu if he made the purchase. He did. That model had separate transmitter and receiver boards and was easily converted to become part of the first 2metre repeater 146.650 at Wharite peak.

The first repeater may well be an embarrassment that should not be mentioned. It was really very crude and maybe it was not 'officially' installed at the Jamies Knob site (*Alan says it was as Ray Sutherland, boss at the radio depot at the time and a radio ham, approved it*). Alan organised that. I'm not sure that I have actually been there myself. I mentioned the signature noisy 'tail'. The Pye reporter's transmitter was a high voltage valve type and if the DC voltage was interrupted, the capacitor ratings were exceeded. So the supply was switched before the capacitors. The transmitter output did not snap off, but faded out, providing a tail. A receiver listening would have an increase of noise as the signal decreased. I did say it was crude! Anyway, it filled a gap until the Repeater proper was installed.

I think Alan may have originally been a dreaded Cber (*he confirmed he was*) as was I. I recall that when we had built our 'Climie' portable transceivers, we met up with some CBers on the ED road above Rarangi. They were communicating with people around Wellington. They were amazed by the noise free coms that Alan and I had with home stations and mobiles (the Wellington repeater was not mentioned of course). The quality didn't even fade when we pointed the 19 inch aerials at the ground!

The last time I saw Alan was to purchase a 10x10 2m yagi off him while he was still living in Blenheim (*Alan left here in 1979!*). Still in service.

Best regards 73 Keith ZL2TPQ

As a result of Keith's emails, I had a lovely, long, chat with Alan as I said to him I thought Grant was involved with building the repeaters from the beginning but he said not as, in the early days, Grant went home to Motueka most weekends and was more involved with the Motueka Branch than Marlborough. It wasn't until he met me, in 1977, that he started staying in town and got more active with the local club.

Alan Wallace ZL1AMW, NZART President at the time, presenting Grant ZL2BK, with his Branch 22 Life Membership certificate, 2001



NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD 2025

In recognition of the United Nations International Volunteer Year (IVY2026), a special Volunteer Service Award is awarded by Hon James Meager and Hon Louise Upston, Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

This award acknowledges the outstanding contribution, collaboration, and unwavering dedication of volunteers who work together to locate, assist, and bring hope to people in distress.

The volunteer service award is proudly presented to:

Surf Life Saving New Zealand
Coastguard Tautiaki Moana
New Zealand Land Search and Rescue
Fire and Emergency New Zealand
Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (AREC)



L-R; Paul Rennie, John Newson, Daniel Erickson, Soren Low, Joanne Watson, the Hon James Meager)

Paul Rennie says he was very privileged to be invited to attend the annual SAR AWARDS held on Tuesday night at Parliament. It was a great night to remember as AREC National received an award, of which copies are going to be produced and dispatched to ALL AREC groups around the country.



From the AREC Facebook page:

A big congratulations to our wonderful volunteer Jim Nelson, who was presented with a Certificate of Achievement by The Hon James Meager, Associate Minister of Transport, at the NZ Search and Rescue awards on Tuesday night.

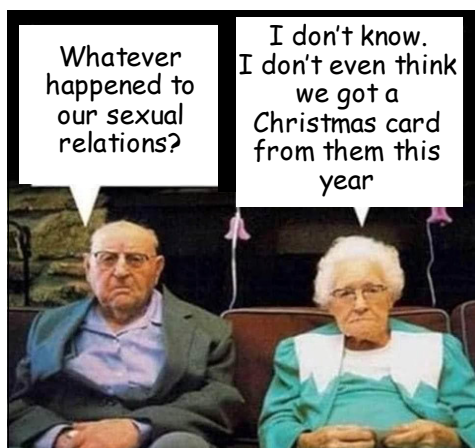
Jim has been with us for 28 years, responding to call-outs, and going above and beyond to make sure the work gets done.

His mahi behind the scenes, maintaining equipment and supporting with training is greatly appreciated and we are proud to see him recognised for his volunteer work.

As 2026 marks the International Year of the Volunteer, we were pleased to have the opportunity to bring a number of volunteers along to the awards celebration as well.

Photo credit for both photos: Marty Melville Photography

Graeme ZL1BDS and wife Heather have been in Wanaka where Graeme has, despite the cold, been activating POTA. Thanks for the photos Heather! Temp was still 0° at 2pm. Their coldest morning was -5°



Whatever happened to our sexual relations?

I don't know. I don't even think we got a Christmas card from them this year



just Want To Dance With Santa Clause' by Zoey Deschanel . There is also 'One Shoe Blues' sung by BB King. She often has Yo-Yo Ma, world renown cellist, playing in the background of her audio books and stories. Great listening for the grandchildren, or great grandchildren.

This drawing is by Sandra Boynton. It goes with the very catchy tune she wrote called 'Snow, Snow, Snow'. I suggest you go to Youtube and have a listen. Other songs of hers that are easy listening are 'Alligator Stroll', sung by Josh Turner and 'I

PRESIDENT'S PATTTER

NZART Conference Nelson June 5 and 6 2027

It is official, next year's AGM and conference will be on King's Birthday weekend at the Tahuna Beach Holiday Park conference centre.

I went to Nelson on June 27th to meet with the organising committee and have a look at the venue. Our club has offered to organise the forums/presentations for the weekend. Part of this role will be making sure that forums run OK in the three rooms available, so volunteers will be needed for that.

We will also be seeking volunteers to join the roster at the raffle sales table if needed.

It may be a while again before you have this event in your back yard so please make the effort to attend.

Lighthouse Weekend

Unfortunately the Cape Campbell lighthouse accommodation is not available for us this year. This is a combination of lambing and road issues. There is always scope for an expedition out there later in the year before the summer season, if a group wanted to activate the lighthouse.

Brayshaw Park

Thanks to Don and Greg for organising maintenance work at the remote HF site.

There have been intermittent dropouts of the system, which may be due to batteries at the end of life. There is a plan to replace these with some surplus batteries, before the next general meeting, from Grant ZL2BK's collection that look like they have useful life left. There will still be batteries left.



Photo ©Greg Barton

Hamcram

All 8 of our candidates passed the exam at the recent Hamcram, which is great news. It is not the easiest to teach at these so thanks to all that helped and to Greg for anchoring the weekend. Thanks to Herrie, a recent graduate who helped with teaching.

Topfest September 19 and 20 at Vintage Car Club Rooms Brayshaw Park

A program for this is pretty much put together. Registration fee will be \$20 cash paid on the day. Nick and I will soon be asking for people to let us know if attending. We will be calling for volunteers on the day to help out.

695 Project

Access to the site has the go ahead of the landowner and an agreement all but finalised. Having an enclosure built from the suppliers of polystyrene/colour steel is not proving easy: lack of interest from suppliers. We are looking at building an enclosure from durable materials using the same person who repaired the Ward 560 hut after it was damaged.

POTA Day

How about we choose a Saturday a bit later in the year and have a mass turnout of MARC members to do activations and have new amateurs along with us?

VHF SDR and Sponsorship of the Win-Link Site

Expect and update on this at next weeks general meeting.

"Cold weather means a cozy day at home and hot chocolate at the ready."

CONSTRUCTORS AWARD - 10th September

This is held every September on the General Meeting night and is open to all club members. Now is the time to start thinking about your entry, with plenty of time to build and refine it. The idea is to show other members what can be done and to perhaps start them thinking what else they could do. Amateur radio opens up a whole world of possibilities!

CONSTRUCTORS AWARD RULES

You must have made your construction yourself. It can be anything you like, either from scratch or from a kit.

Most construct something amateur radio related but we also get a few electronic devices or computer related constructs. We've even had sculptures made from electronic/radio parts!

If you are unsure, contact a committee member and ask.

On the night, everyone brings their entries which are lined up on a table. After the meeting, each entrant is asked to briefly describe their entry. The judges (sucked into it on the night and, as a result, are open to bribery - choccy biscuits might work) then judge the entries whilst everyone else enjoys a cuppa.

The winner is then announced and presented with the trophy (pictured right), which they get to keep proudly on prominent display in their home, or radio shack, until next year.



REMOTE HF REPAIR

Saturday 27th saw a number of members at Brayshaw Park ready to lower the tower so repairs could be done. Once they figured out how to winch it down, with Jed doing most of the hard work, Leon Jones, Sounds Security Data Ltd, got to work on the repair. It was at this point they struck problems. At the time this newsletter was being finalised, they were still working on the problem, so hopefully next month's instalment will have more photos and information on what the problem was and how it was fixed.



Man the winch! Coming down!



Jed working hard on the winch



*Above: Jed photographs lowered tower
Below: Leon helps on the winch*



Luxurious hut interior



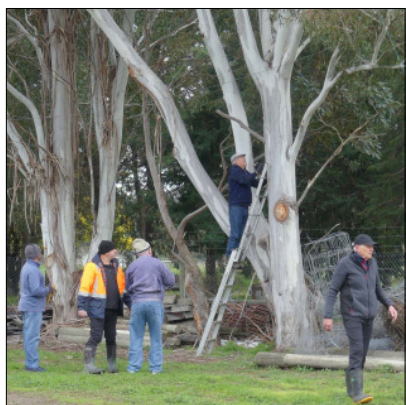
One problem to repair



Winch closeup



*George ZL2GTI watches
Leon at work*



*L-R: Jed ZL2BTN, Leon Jones,
Don ZL3DN, John ZL2BH (up
tree), Greg ZL2GBX*

*Photos by Greg ZL2GBX
and me but I can't
remember which photos
were taken by who but I
don't think it matters*



HAMCRAM

The 2027 Hamcram was held on the weekend of 13-14 June at the EOC and we had eight candidates, all of whom passed the exam on Sunday afternoon. Seven of the candidates have their licenses. Gaspard, a visitor from France, didn't meet the residency requirements of RSM so is unable to become a ZL. A big thanks to the presenters, examiners and supporters, and to Matt ZL4HZ for making the EOC conference room available for the course.

Following the rather intense theory of the Hamcram we decided to try a practical "hands-on" Hamcram Plus for the new Hams and that was held on Saturday morning 4 July again at the EOC, in the Comms Room. We opened it up to any recent new Hams as well as those who had attended the Hamcram. We did a bit of "show & tell" and talked about what to build or buy and where to get it to get on the air, and shared some useful websites and sources of information.

We then let them loose with handhelds to start making contacts via simplex or the 695 repeater. This expanded over the morning to include some DMR contacts and some POTA (or VOTA and LOTA) chasing on 40M. Thank you to all the club members out there who participated to help build the contacts. I think the record was Tracey ZL2BDD who bagged 24 over the session. It was great to see and hear the confidence and professionalism of the operators growing as their contacts accumulated.

Again a big thanks to the club members who supported the activity and shared their knowledge and experience with our newer Hams.

Here's a line-up of our newest members...

ZL2MLB	ZL2DMB	ZL2HJ	
			
Chris Cookson	David-Michael Buckman	Gaspard Torris	Hermanus-Jansen van Vuuren
ZL2BAA	ZL2JGX	ZL3WIL	ZL2BDD
			
Jeremy Lamb	John Grant	Marc Wild	Tracey Currie



Neville ZL2BNE showing
his creations to
Hermanus-Jansen ZL2HJ

David-Michael ZL2DMB
& Jed ZL2BTN



Herrie ZL2HTO
& Chris ZL2MLB

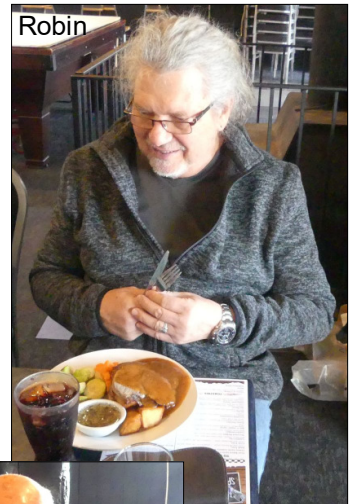
Hermanus-Jansen ZL2HJ
building his contacts



MID WINTER LUNCH @ THE WOODY

Almost 30 members thoroughly enjoyed their lunches at The Woody on the 4th July. The meals were all very generous servings and delicious. Some had room for dessert and coffee afterwards. There was a lot of talk and laughter from both tables.

Interesting to hear Tony & Fay Daken have their house (and steep section) on the market, hoping to move from Anakiwa into Picton while Graeme Dillon and Doreen Sheridan are moving into a Springlands Metlifecare unit.





Tony & Fay



Brenda & Bernie



Deborah

Linda



Marion & John



Me & Marion



Heather

Wayne

The three photos to the right have been digitally altered. I had two photos of Ken & Dianne with one of them not looking right in each so I put two separate photos together so they both looked good!

The other two had a lot of background glare so I asked Chatgpt to remove it. It decided Wayne & Heather needed a grassy view out the window behind them, rather than the motel wall actually there. Stuart & Jody's background matches what was actually there, minus the sun streaming through the door.



Jody & Stuart



Ken

Dianne